

For Immediate Release
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Lewistown, MT----The Bureau of Land Management has postponed all 11 of the public meetings originally scheduled for November and December to solicit comments on the Draft Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument Resource Management Plan (RMP) and has extended the public comment period.

All of the meetings will be rescheduled at a later date.

Earlier, the BLM had postponed the first four meetings scheduled between November 28 and December 1, because of the severe winter storm that settled across central Montana and the resulting dangerous travel conditions.

“We were concerned about scheduling these meetings during the holiday season for several reasons, but that’s what our planning schedule required,” said Monument Manager Gary Slagel. “Aside from possible weather complications, those weeks between Thanksgiving and Christmas are extremely busy for everyone, and sometimes attending another evening meeting is almost impossible. Also, we think this monument is an important topic in our region and allowing the public some extra time to review the Draft RMP before attending meetings should work well. We heard these same comments from members of the public, and we agree with those concerns.”

The BLM also received requests for extending the public comment period on the Draft RMP and has decided to extend the comment period for an additional 90 days. The comment period will now close on April 26, 2006. Originally the comment period was to close on January 26, 2006.

“We realize this change may be inconvenient for some, but overall there seems to be significant public support for delaying these meetings and extending the comment period,” Slagel offered. “We’ll be rescheduling these meetings early in 2006 (probably in February or March) and will announce the schedule as quickly as possible.”

(more)

These meetings will be rescheduled in Winifred, Lewistown, Fort Benton, Havre, Big Sandy, Chinook , Hays, Malta, Billings, Great Falls and Kalispell.

In the interim, members of the public are encouraged to submit written comments concerning the Draft RMP to the Monument Manager, Lewistown Field Office, 920 NE Main, P.O. Box 1160, Lewistown, MT 59457.

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